THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

DEAGAN
PEACE CHIMES

TRAINING MANUAL

For Musicians

ONBOARDING



PREPARED BY
Michael Luchtan

The best way to keep an instrument healthy and in good condition is to play it. For a public instrument like the Peace Chimes, it is important to play it regularly. Please make every effort to make your regular time slot or arrange a substitute. At the end of your performance, turn the key and press the button to play the automatic player mechanism from the keyboard. The roll that you select, like the music you play, is up to your discretion.

Thank you for your service. The Peace Chimes were installed at the request of the Mothers of Buncombe County as a memorial to their children who were casualties of World War I. Your continued participation helps to keep their memorial alive and the chimes and automatic player in working condition.

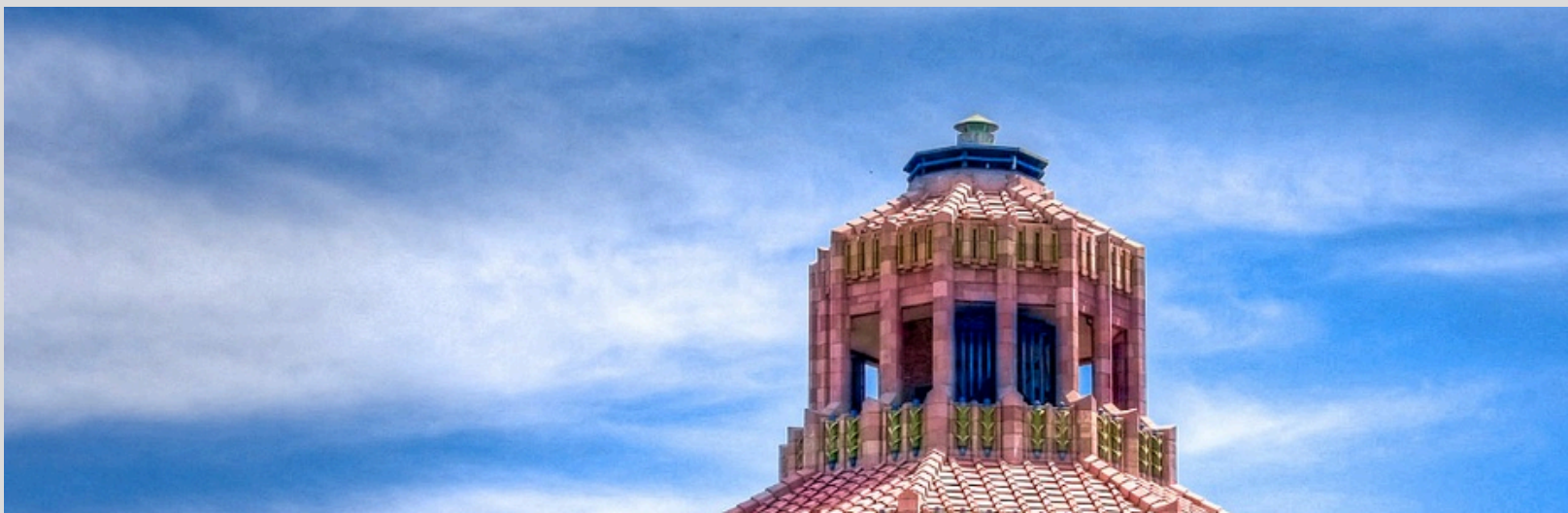
“Let it not be said of us that we have forgotten those who gave their all that we might live in peace and prosperity”
John H. Cathey
Asheville Mayor 1923-1927

The importance of your role as glockenmeister of the city is illustrated in the security measures in place to reach the keyboard.

First there is security who will check your bags and send you through a metal detector. It will beep, but you will be sent through. Remember, it is forbidden to bring weapons or drugs.

You must then obtain a key to enter the mechanical closet on the 5th floor, a key to the case wherein the keyboard is contained, a key to the keyboard, and in order to turn on the keyboard, you must insert a special key.

It’s an awesome responsibility. You are worthy!!



The Peace Chimes are not so different than keyboards you are used to. The touch of course is distinct, but a sensitive keyboard player can catch on quickly.

More important is to understand the role of the chimes in the community, and the responsibility of a player of a public instrument and the peculiarities of playing bells.

There are no hard and fast rules, and you will catch on quickly, but nevertheless included here are some observations and conventions often used in public bell instruments.



Our Deagan Peace Chimes has 10 tones. It is an F scale with an additional flatted 7th, the octave, and the 9th. It is not tempered. Due to precision engineering, the key of F is where it will resonate the most.

In any case, the 10 tone limitation dictates what melody you can play in which key. If the song places the tonic in the middle of the melody, the key of Bb would be your best bet. But try any key that you can imagine working and, better yet, forget about the keys! Do whatever you can to evoke emotion, tension, suspense, and release from the clanging of a metal tube that has been exposed to the elements for a century. It’s your time slot, you play what you want (just do it tastefully, please)!



Tips for playing the Peace Chimes:

1. Not too long. This refers not only to your set but also each song. You don't need to play every verse.
2. Since touch can be lacking in bells, think about the rolling ball of tempo and use rubato to give tension and resolution to the melody.
3. A lot of bell compositions will resolve to the lowest, most powerful note-- the low F
4. Don't forget that it is also a percussion instrument

Remember it is a break in silence when a bell is first struck-- it is advantageous to pay attention to how that might feel to the listener. If you shock them, well take advantage of that shock and deliver something thunderous, or back off and deliver something expressive and emotional, until the climax has the same shock as the first tone, and always (but never always) resolve to the lowest tonic.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US.

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